CAPTIVE JOHNSON.

Before the conquest of Canada by the English, in 1760, there were no settlements in Vermont, except along the Connecticut river, in the southeast corner of the territory. The Green Mountain State was a wild country and used only as a military highway by war-parties of French or English colonists who always went to war with each other whenever France and England were engaged in hostilities. Before the days of our Revolution these countries were frequently at war, and, consequently their colonies here were frequently engaged in attempts to destroy each other. But previous to the landing of white men on this continent, Vermont was quite as destitute of inhabitants as for many years afterward. It was not occupied as a home by the Indians, but was left as a hunting-ground and battle ground by the warlike tribes which lived around it, and were almost constantly at war with each other. Well-known war-paths led through its valleys, along its rivers and brooks and over its mountains, from Canada on the north to Massachuetts on the south. It is the story of one war-party of Canadian Indians, whose trail through the State is still well-known, that I have set out to tell.

About 1744, the fort called Number Four, was built at what is now known as Charlestown, N. H. It was on the Connecticut river, and just opposite the present town of Rockingham, Vt. In course of time, a little settlement of log houses grew up around the fort, which was the most northern point then occupied by English settlers, being about forty miles beyond the Massachusetts line.

Captain James Johnson settled here with his young wife, in 1749, and began to build a home on the frontier of civilization. Peace prevailed for five years after this, and the young settlement was prosperous and happy. The Johnson family was comfortably housed, and their well cultivated land produced all the necessaries of life.

But this state of happiness was to be rudely disturbed. On the morning of the 30th of August, 1754, just before light, the wild whoop of the savages was heard, and the few inhabitants were awakened from their slumbers. The Indians, some fifty in all, had divided into small parties, and three or four were stationed before every house. There was no military force at this time in the fort, but the roused settlers hastily dressed and seized their arms to defend their homes and families. The Indians, yelling in triumph at the success of their surprise, fired through the doors and killed some of the whites in this manner. Then with logs of wood, used as battering rams, they burst open the doors and either rushed in to slaughter their victims, or waited till the latter darted out in the vain hope to join their friends and make a united stand against the enemy. Several hand-to-hand conflicts ensued, and a number of the warriors fell before the blows of the sturdy settlers.

Capt. Johnson's brave heart trembled for an instant, as he realized the nature of the attack. He had been one of Maj. Rogers' rangers and was not easily frightened, but more than his own life was now at stake. How to save his wife's life was the uppermost thought in his mind. Reconnoitering through a loophole, he saw an opportunity to make a beginning; and, raising his gun, he shot dead, the Indian nearest to him.

"Crouch down on the floor, Susanna," he said, as he seized his two loaded pistols to continue the fight. Before he could use them, however, the door was burst open. Without giving the enemy time to recover from the shock of the blow, he sprang like a tiger through the opening, a pistol in each hand, and two more Indians fell dead at the almost simultaneous discharge of his weapons. Rushing upon the fourth Indian with the empted pistols uplifted, the savage fled, whooping for assistance. Johnson pursued him for a few rods, but soon saw his mistake. A crowd of dusky warriors had gotten between him and his own door, and advanced upon him with leveled guns. Others were all around him and he saw that there was no further hope of successful resistance. He dropped his arms and was quickly seized and bound by his captors.

The Indians next entered the house and dragged out Susanna to where her husband stood. Two other men, Mr. Labaree and Mr. Farnsworth, were also led up as prisoners. A few of the inhabitants had escaped as the Indians tried to take them as prisoners for the purpose of selling them to the French, but the many bleeding scalps fastened in the girdles of the savages, showed what had been the fate of most.

The victors now plundered the houses of food and of anything portable which took their fancy, and then urged the prisoners to the river bank without stopping to burn up the buildings. They followed up the Connecticut river about three miles. Mrs. Johnson lost off her shoe in the rough path and her foot was soon bleeding. When she was nearly exhausted, they placed her upon an old horse they had captured, and thus mounted, she proceeded more easily. They soon made a short stop for breakfast on their stolen provisions, which they shared with their prisoners, and then advanced seven miles farther, where they crossed over into Vermont on rafts which they had constructed of dry timber. At night they stopped and camped in the present town of Weathersfield. For supper they made porridge in kettles brought from Charlestown. The next morning they turned to the right and followed a branch of Black river nearly north. After going six or eight miles, they turned to the left and directed their course by a little brook which was tributary to the stream they had been ascending to that point. They followed this for little more than half a mile, when they found themselves in a deep defile between two steep well-wooded hills, and here they encamped for the rest of the day and night, beside the noisy little brook, in a corner of the present town of Cavendish. This was the birthplace of our heroine, the little daughter of Captain and Mrs. Johnson and the child was appropriately named Captive.

These Indians were a party of St. Francis tribe, whose home was near Three Rivers, in Canada. They were on their way home, and Johnson knew that either death or slavery awaited the prisoners at the end of the journey. For himself, he feared it would be death, because of the braves whom he had slain, and he revolved in his mind the chances of escape. He did not wish to desert his companions and family, but he thought that if free, he could be of more service to them than he could be by sharing their captivity.

Each of the male prisoners had his hands tied together, and the three were bound to each other by a stout thong knotted about their waists. At night they were made to lie down in the center of the circle of savages, and all went to sleep, or appeared to do so. Johnson found that he could free his hands, and then he turned to his companions and whispered to them his design. The noise of the brook made any light sound inaudible to the Indians, and it was so dark in the thick woods that any one could not see clearly many feet away.

None of the men had any weapons—not even a pocket knife. Johnson picked up a sharp stone, and by much rubbing succeeded in severing the thong which bound him to his companions. He then offered to attempt to liberate them, but they feared recapture and the death which was almost certain to follow it, and declined to attempt to escape.

Johnson turned upon his breast and studied his surroundings, considering meanwhile the course he would pursue. All was still. The darkness was in his favor. His experience as a ranger, and the dangers he had passed through gave him confidence in his abilities. He thought his strength, speed and endurance made him superior to any one of his savage foes, and he determined to make a bold break for freedom. He rose to his feet noislessly, scarcely stirring a leaf. He knew this was the moment of his greatest danger, for some watchful savage might shoot him down before he could take a step. Swiftly, but silently, he stepped to the inner edge of the circle of savages, and then with a tremendous bound he sprang over a sleeping warrior and ran with the speed of a deer into the darkness, and up the steep incline of the hill. One gun was fired and a bullet struck a tree close beside him. He heard the whoop of the aroused savages, and the crashing of several through the bushes in pursuit of him.

As Johnson gained the top of the hill he picked up a stout club, and getting behing a tree, he listened. He heard one Indian coming who seemed to be near the top of the hill, and far in advance of his comrades. The ranger waited for him, and as the Indian came close up to the tree, Johnson sprang out and dealt him a blow over the head which would have felled an ox. The Indian fell without a groan. Seizing the fallen warrior's arms and ammunition, the escaped prisoner fled into the dark forest along the hillside, until he was nearly a mile away from the encampment. Stopping there, he waited until he was satisfied he was not pursued. Assured on this point, he examined his gun to see that it was all right, and then crawled under some low spruces to assure a few hours' sleep.

In the morning, after a hearty breakfast, which they shared with their prisoners, he Indians resumed their march, giving up all hopes of capturing the lost prisoner. Their way led over the Green Mountains toward Crown Point. Mrs. Johnson, on horseback, was urged along as fast as possible, but was obliged to stop frequently for rest, and finally her captors made a litter and compelled the white men to carry her. In the midst of her sufferings she was comforted by the thought that her husband was safe, and hope filled the mother's heart, that he would contrive some way to rescue her and the little Captive.

Provisions grew scarce as they proceeded, and all suffered from hunger. On the fifth day they shot the horse, and then there was a grand feast. The Indians yelled with delight, and after all had satisfied their hunger, they indulged in a war-dance around the fire, forcing the prisoners to join with them.

Johnson slept well under the spruces, but at an early hour he awoke, and as soon as it was light he crawled out of his resting place. Glancing around to make sure that no enemy was in view he started back toward the Indian trail, intending to strike it some distance in the rear. He soon reached the spot where they had turned away from the branch of the Black river, and crossing the trail to the south, he turned to follow the Indians, hoping to fall in with some party of white men, and be enabled to give the savages battle. He followed them day by day for nearly one hundred miles, but met with no friends to assist him in the recovery of his wife and child. His hope grew faint as he approached Lake Champlain, for he knew that he could not safely follow them further.

As the Indians reached the lake, and found that the boats they had left were safe, they filled the air with yells of joy and triumph. Before embarking they determined to have another war-dance and building a fire, they danced around it, singing as they went. Their prisoners, to each of whom they taught a few words, were forced to dance and sing with them. Mrs. Johnson with the rest took part in the dance, and the song they taught her and which she sang till she was hoarse, ran thus: "Danna witchee natchepung."

The dance concluded, they entered the boats and shot out into the lake. With tears in his eyes Johnson saw them start to cross over to Crown Point, where was then a French garrison. Watching them out of sight he turned back with a determination to join his old companions in arms, and wage a bitter war against those who had despoiled him of the treasures of his life.

He returned to Charleston and offered his services as a scout. His well known skill and courage caused him to be quickly accepted, and thenceforward he was engaged in many skirmishes with the Indians, and his rifle took frequent vengeance for the wrong which he had suffered from them.

At Crown Point the prisoners were well entertained by the French, and the little Captive was handsomely dressed. But after four days of rest they took boat again with the Savages down the lake and river to Sorel. Thence they went to the Indian village of St. Francis, where there was much rejoicing over the return of the successful war party. The prisoners wore kindly treated, and Mrs. Johnson's master and his brother, each presented her with a string of wampum, to express their generosity and hospitality. In a few days, however, she and her infant were traded off to another Indian, for a boy captive and a number of blankets. In this new family she was received as a sister and had no reason to complain of her savage brothers and sisters. After some months of this life the prisoners were delivered to the French, who paid for them at the rate of eight dollars per head.

Mrs. Johnson and Captive were taken into the family of a French officer in Montreal, with whom they spent the rest of their captivity. After about three years their master was ordered to Fort Frontenac (now Kingstown) and thither, together with his family they accompanied him.

In the summer of 1758, Gen. Abercrombie dispatched Col. Bradstreet with three thousand men, mostly provincials to attack Fort Frontenac. Capt. Johnson was in this force and glad of any service on Canadion soil for the chance it gave him of meeting with, or hearing from his wife and child. Col. Bradstreet landed his men within a mile of the fort before the enemy was aware of his approach. The garrison, which consisted of only one hundred and ten Frenchmen and Indians, made no attempt at defence but surrendered at discretion.

As the victorious English poured into the fort, Capt. Johnson came face to face with his long lost wife.

"Susanna! is it possible? Can this be you?" cried the astonished and delighted soldier as he saw his wife before him.

She gazed at him a moment in equal surprise, but quickly recognized him and sank sobbing with joy on his shoulder.

"Oh James, you have come at last!" she said, while smiles and tears strove for the mastery.

A little girl of four years of age came running toward them. It was Captive, and she was soon gathered in her father's arms.

But little remains to be told. Capt. Johnson returned with his wife and child to Charlestown, and there Mrs. Johnson had the pleasure, later, of welcoming one of her Indian brothers, Sabotis, who was brought there a prisoner by Maj. Rogers. All the Charlestown prisoners found their way home at the close of the war in 1760. Captive Johnson lived to an advanced age. She married Col. George Kimball an officer in our Revolutionary war, and many of her descendants still reside in the Connecticut valley.

Just before you enter the village of Felchville, Vt., coming from the south, you cross a small plank bridge, over a narrow stream. There on the right hand, near to the bridge, and but a foot or two from the stone wall which bounds the road, stands, and for nearly a hundred years has stood, a slatestone monument. It is a mere slab scarcely four feet high, and rudely carved on it appears what is supposed to be the outline figure of an Indian with his weapons of war. It is much weatherworn, but these words of the inscription may be read:

"This is near the spot that the Indians encamped the night after they took Mr. Johnson and family, Mr. Labarree and Mr. Farnsworth, August 30, 1754."

Close beside this monument is a smaller stone of the same kind and shape, which was, originally, set upon the very spot of the Indian encampment; but as that was in the woods, half a mile up the brook, and that distance away from the travelled road, so that few were likely to see it, the stone was removed and placed beside the larger one, where it has stood now for over seventy years. The inscription on the smaller stone is as follows:

"On the 31st of August, 1754, Capt. Jas. Johnson had a daughter born on this spot of ground, being captivated with his whole family by the Indians."

In all the region round about the story of Captive Johnson is a familiar one, and her name will not so soon fade away, as have the footprints of the Indians from those scenes which they once traversed. —Rev. Homer White in St. Albans Messenger.

NEWS AND NOTES.

—In an editorial headed "McKinley's Business Faculty," the Chicago Herald remarks that "one would expect to find a thoroughly practical business man at the head of the practical business party of protection." Permit us to observe that one would expect "to find a thoroughly practical business man at the head of the practical business party" of free trade, but as a matter of fact Richard Cobden became so involved in financial difficulties during his anti-Corn Law crusade that a purse of $400,000 was raised by his friends to relieve his pecuniary distress.

—Because there are 2100 miles of water between San Francisco and Honolulu is not a valid argument against annexation. There are more than 2100 miles of land between New York and San Francisco, and the early journeys across the plains were infinitely more tedious and dangerous than the trip to the Sandwich Islands.

—The Troy Times says: Experience teaches that women most to be depended upon for right action will not in any great numbers give attention to the elections or make their presence felt at the polls. On the other hand, the lower elements among the women, just as among men, are always ready for active service on election days under the direction of whatever influence may at the time appeal to them the most strongly. The trouble with the whole woman suffrage movement, and the one which more than anything else delays the coming of the time when women shall vote, is the indifference of so many of the better classes among the women themselves. In the West, where conditions bring the women into more direct contact with business and political life, the feminine ballot has made some progress. But in the East the great body of women have a positive distaste for participation in politics, and refuse to exercise the voting privilege where it is accorded them. They are oontent to use their influence upon their fathers and brothers and husbands, rightly feeling that thus they wield a powerful influence upon political affairs.

—The Troy Press says: At Union Spring, N. Y., a novel experiment has been made in controlling the liquor traffic. A committee of citizens, properly authorized, have taken entire charge of the business, and they include the Protestant Episcopal and Roman Catholic clergymen. Sales are to be made only in compliance with the following regulations: "We will allow no man to pay for another man's drink. We will permit no drunkenness, nor any approach to it. We will allow no one apparently under the legal age within our doors. We will sell to no man if by the proper persons we are forbidden so to do. To certain other persons, their names to be passed upon by a majority of the committee, we will not sell at all. We will not sell spirits in larger quantities than a single glass, except on a physician's order, and of all such sales we will keep a record. These and such other wholesome rules as from time to time we may deem desirable, we will enforce. Our entire profits, which will be large, will be handed over as frequently as possible to the authorities with the understanding that they will be used for the purpose of reducing the taxation of the town."

—Throughout the civilized world gold is recognized as the standard by which money is measured. This policy is the product of human wisdom, gathered by centuries of experience. Numberless cheap money experiments have been made, but no Nation was ever yet enriched by this style of inflation. Nevertheless there are always theorists with us who cannot comprehend why any one should want for money when it is so easy to manufacture it. The Government, by running its printing presses an hour or two longer could fairly bedazzle the eyes of the people with a flood of crisp greenbacks and handsome treasury notes or by investing $65,000,000 in silver bullion could give the country a hundred million silver dollars. When the arguments of the inflationists are stripped of veneering and sophistry and confusing circumlocution, they rest upon faith in the ability of the government to create something out of nothing. It occurs to us that the matured judgment of the world is to be relied rather than these theories, which have never been successfully put into operation anywhere.

—When Mr. Cleveland was serving his first term in the presidency he appointed Alexander Russell Webb consul to Manila, and that gentleman seems to have devoted himself, in addition to attending to duties, to a study of Mohammedanism and to have become a convert to that faith. Mr. Webb has a perfect right to his opinion in the matter of religious belief. But he is not content with that. He proposes to seek converts in this country and has already begun his mission in New York, where he is endeavoring to demonstrate the superiority of the Moslem to any other religion. The ex-consul, it is said, is backed up by plenty of money contributed by wealthy Moslems in India. The first step in this peculiar missionary scheme will be to start a high class weekly journal in English, to be devoted to an exposition of Islam and the writings of distinguished Mussulmans. Then a Mohammedan publishing house is to be established, whose chief business will be to print and distribute in unlimited numbers an English translation of the Koran. Finally, when enough converts are obtained to guarantee sufficient support a mosque will be built. So far as we can see the only sufferers from Mr. Webb's missionary work will be the men who are putting up the money. We don't entertain for a moment any idea that ex-Consul Webb will secure any converts because no enlightened race will subscribe to the teachings of the Koran; one of the most pronounced is that women have no souls. A religion which gives a man a sure mortgage on Paradise and relegates a woman to eternal nothingness, can gain no foothold even in this country of myriad beliefs.

—California's beef sugar production rose from 8,000,000 pounds in 1891 to 23,000,000 pounds in '92, under the stimulus of the sugar bounty. Yet that State gave its electoral vote to a party whose first move will undoubtedly be the abolition of the bounty system.

—Canada's cool suggestion that the tolls imposed on her vessels on the Soo canal, in retaliation for discrimination against American tonnage on the Welland, be refunded, is hardly likely to find favor with the new Administration. Our Canadian friends are liable to discover before many days have gone that Judge Gresham isn't Mr. Bayard.

—The car coupler bill, for the purpose of protecting the lives and limbs of railroad brakemen, has passed the House with the Senate amendments. The passage of this measure of justice and humanity was obstinately resisted by a large number of the Democratic Representatives, in spite of the fact that the Chicago platform demanded its enactment. The terms of this measure have previously been explained by the Press. Its final passage is solely due to the determined fight made in behalf of railway employees by Republican members of congress.

—The banquet tendered to Vice President Morton on Monday night by the entire Senate, without distinction of party, was a striking and graceful compliment to an accomplished and patriotic statesman. Mr. Morton has won the sincere esteem not only of his own party, but of broad minded men of all parties, by the impartial and efficient manner in which he has discharged the duties of the presiding officer of the Senate. His record as Vice President is that of an honorable and straightforward public servant.

—Messrs. Richmond, Croscup & Co., 9 East 18th Street, New York announce for early publication, "Personal Reminiscences, 1840–'90," by the Hon. L. E. Chittenden, author of "President Lincoln and his Administration." The book promises to be of great interest, as Mr. Chittenden's acquaintance with the public men and his participation in events of National importance during this most interesting period of our National history, as indicated in the title, appeals to a wide circle of readers. It will be remembered that Mr. Chittenden, who is of Vermont extraction, was Register of the Treasury during President Lincoln's Administration, and is the last surviving officer of that department connected with the issue of securities during the war. He was one of Lincoln's trusted subordinates, and his quiet office was one of the President's chosen retreats from the turmoil and cares of public life.